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APPLICATION NO.	FILING DATE	FIRST NAMED INVENTOR	ATTORNEY DOCKET NO.	CONFIRMATION NO.
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10/776,328

02/12/2004

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05/14/2007

EXAMINER

POLLICOFF, STEVEN B

ART UNIT

PAPER NUMBER

3728

MAIL DATE

DELIVERY MODE

05/14/2007

PAPER

Please find below and/or attached an Office communication concerning this application or proceeding.

The time period for reply, if any, is set in the attached communication.

Office Action Summary

Application No.

10/776,328

Applicant(s)

GELARDI ET AL.

Examiner

Steven B. Pollicoff

Art Unit

3728

-- The MAILING DATE of this communication appears on the cover sheet with the correspondence address --

Period for Reply

A SHORTENED STATUTORY PERIOD FOR REPLY IS SET TO EXPIRE 3 MONTH(S) OR THIRTY (30) DAYS, WHICHEVER IS LONGER, FROM THE MAILING DATE OF THIS COMMUNICATION.

- Extensions of time may be available under the provisions of 37 CFR 1.136(a). In no event, however, may a reply be timely filed after SIX (6) MONTHS from the mailing date of this communication.
- If NO period for reply is specified above, the maximum statutory period will apply and will expire SIX (6) MONTHS from the mailing date of this communication.
- Failure to reply within the set or extended period for reply will, by statute, cause the application to become ABANDONED (35 U.S.C. § 133). Any reply received by the Office later than three months after the mailing date of this communication, even if timely filed, may reduce any earned patent term adjustment. See 37 CFR 1.704(b).

Status

- 1) ☒ Responsive to communication(s) filed on 20 February 2007.
- 2a) ☒ This action is **FINAL**. 2b) ☐ This action is non-final.
- 3) ☐ Since this application is in condition for allowance except for formal matters, prosecution as to the merits is closed in accordance with the practice under *Ex parte Quayle*, 1935 C.D. 11, 453 O.G. 213.

Disposition of Claims

- 4) ☒ Claim(s) 1-50 is/are pending in the application.
- 4a) Of the above claim(s) 2-20 and 30-50 is/are withdrawn from consideration.
- 5) ☐ Claim(s) _____ is/are allowed.
- 6) ☐ Claim(s) 1, 21-27 and 29 is/are rejected.
- 7) ☒ Claim(s) 28 is/are objected to.
- 8) ☐ Claim(s) _____ are subject to restriction and/or election requirement.

Application Papers

- 9) ☐ The specification is objected to by the Examiner.
- 10) ☐ The drawing(s) filed on _____ is/are: a) ☐ accepted or b) ☐ objected to by the Examiner.
Applicant may not request that any objection to the drawing(s) be held in abeyance. See 37 CFR 1.85(a).
Replacement drawing sheet(s) including the correction is required if the drawing(s) is objected to. See 37 CFR 1.121(d).
- 11) ☐ The oath or declaration is objected to by the Examiner. Note the attached Office Action or form PTO-152.

Priority under 35 U.S.C. § 119

- 12) ☐ Acknowledgment is made of a claim for foreign priority under 35 U.S.C. § 119(a)-(d) or (f).
- a) ☐ All b) ☐ Some * c) ☐ None of:
1. ☐ Certified copies of the priority documents have been received.
 2. ☐ Certified copies of the priority documents have been received in Application No. _____.
 3. ☐ Copies of the certified copies of the priority documents have been received in this National Stage application from the International Bureau (PCT Rule 17.2(a)).
- * See the attached detailed Office action for a list of the certified copies not received.

Attachment(s)

- | | |
|--|---|
| 1) <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Notice of References Cited (PTO-892) | 4) <input type="checkbox"/> Interview Summary (PTO-413)
Paper No(s)/Mail Date. _____ |
| 2) <input type="checkbox"/> Notice of Draftsperson's Patent Drawing Review (PTO-948) | 5) <input type="checkbox"/> Notice of Informal Patent Application |
| 3) <input type="checkbox"/> Information Disclosure Statement(s) (PTO/SB/08)
Paper No(s)/Mail Date _____ | 6) <input type="checkbox"/> Other: _____ |

DETAILED ACTION

Election/Restrictions

Currently amended Claim 1 now reads on the elected species and will be examined. However, claims 2-10 will not be examined as Applicant has not amended claim 2 to conform to the scope of the elected species. A tray having "aligning projections" (see Claims page 2) is not disclosed in elected Species I. Currently amended claim 33 will not be examined as applicant has also failed to conform to the scope of the elected species. A tray "connected to the front panel and back panel" of a book cover (see Claims page 8) is outside the scope of elected species I.

Double Patenting

Claims 21-29 of this application conflict with claims 1-20 of Application No. 10/921,350. 37 CFR 1.78(b) provides that when two or more applications filed by the same applicant contain conflicting claims, elimination of such claims from all but one application may be required in the absence of good and sufficient reason for their retention during pendency in more than one application. Applicant is required to either cancel the conflicting claims from all but one application or maintain a clear line of demarcation between the applications. See MPEP § 822.

The nonstatutory double patenting rejection is based on a judicially created doctrine grounded in public policy (a policy reflected in the statute) so as to prevent the unjustified or improper timewise extension of the "right to exclude" granted by a patent and to prevent possible harassment by multiple assignees. A nonstatutory obviousness-type double patenting rejection is appropriate where the conflicting claims

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are not identical, but at least one examined application claim is not patentably distinct from the reference claim(s) because the examined application claim is either anticipated by, or would have been obvious over, the reference claim(s). See, e.g., *In re Berg*, 140 F.3d 1428, 46 USPQ2d 1226 (Fed. Cir. 1998); *In re Goodman*, 11 F.3d 1046, 29 USPQ2d 2010 (Fed. Cir. 1993); *In re Longi*, 759 F.2d 887, 225 USPQ 645 (Fed. Cir. 1985); *In re Van Ornum*, 686 F.2d 937, 214 USPQ 761 (CCPA 1982); *In re Vogel*, 422 F.2d 438, 164 USPQ 619 (CCPA 1970); and *In re Thorington*, 418 F.2d 528, 163 USPQ 644 (CCPA 1969).

A timely filed terminal disclaimer in compliance with 37 CFR 1.321(c) or 1.321(d) may be used to overcome an actual or provisional rejection based on a nonstatutory double patenting ground provided the conflicting application or patent either is shown to be commonly owned with this application, or claims an invention made as a result of activities undertaken within the scope of a joint research agreement.

Effective January 1, 1994, a registered attorney or agent of record may sign a terminal disclaimer. A terminal disclaimer signed by the assignee must fully comply with 37 CFR 3.73(b).

Claims 21-29 are provisionally rejected on the ground of nonstatutory obviousness-type double patenting as being unpatentable over claims 1-20 of copending Application No. 10/921,350. Although the conflicting claims are not identical, they are not patentably distinct from each other because Applicant uses different terminology to claim the same invention.

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This is a provisional obviousness-type double patenting rejection because the conflicting claims have not in fact been patented.

Claim Rejections - 35 USC § 102

The following is a quotation of the appropriate paragraphs of 35 U.S.C. 102 that form the basis for the rejections under this section made in this Office action:

A person shall be entitled to a patent unless –

(b) the invention was patented or described in a printed publication in this or a foreign country or in public use or on sale in this country, more than one year prior to the date of application for patent in the United States.

Claim 1 is rejected under 35 U.S.C. 102(b) as being anticipated by Kunimune et al (US Pat 4,892,189).

With respect to claim 1, Kunimune discloses a tray connecting apparatus (see Kunimune Fig 4 below) comprising: a flexible plastic strip having a central, longitudinal

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living hinge, the strip having one or more tray holder clips connected to each other,

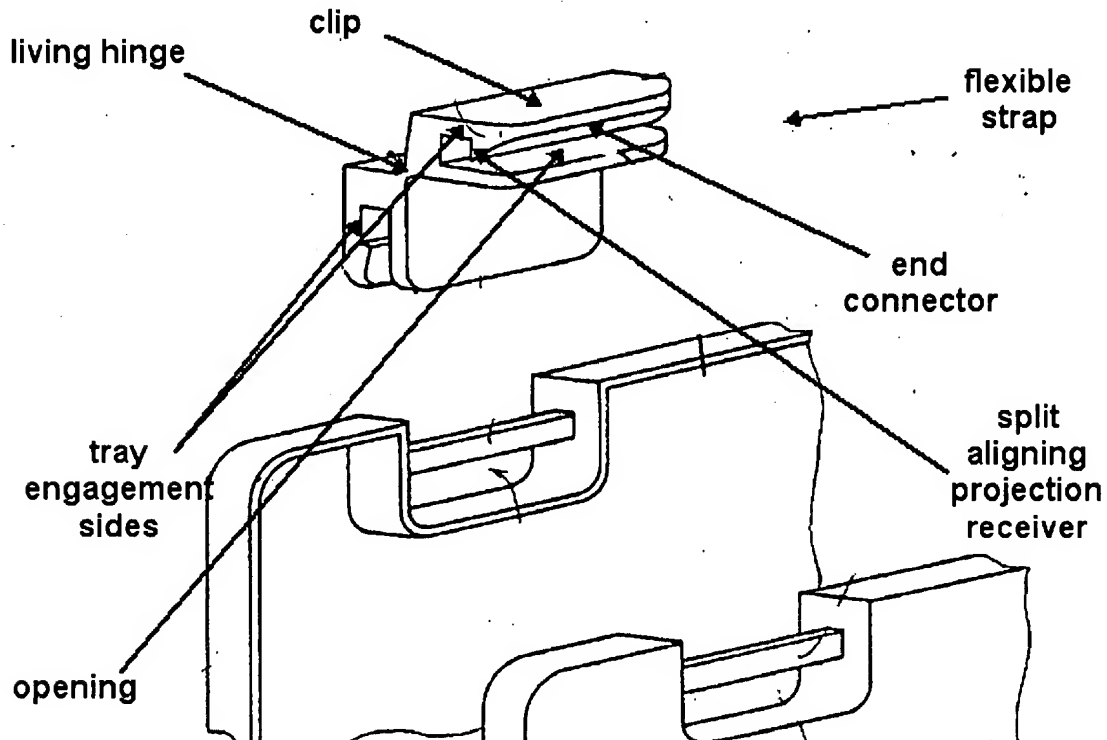


Fig 4 Kunimune '189.

each tray holder clip having opposite tray engagement sides projecting laterally from the central living hinge, the tray engagement sides having end connectors capable of fitting mounting recesses in tray edges, the end connectors having split aligning projection receivers at extremities capable of receiving aligning projections on the tray edge mounting recesses, and the tray holder clips having openings capable of receiving securing projections in the tray edge recesses.

Claims 21-27 are rejected under 35 U.S.C. 102(b) as being anticipated by Li (US Pat 5,727,681).

With respect to claims 21 and 27, LI discloses a package comprising a stack of one or more individual trays (Li Fig 4), one or more sets of mounting recesses (44) along an edge of each individual tray, one or more sets of clips (Fig 5), wherein the number of sets of clips corresponds to the number of mounting recesses on the individual trays, wherein individual clips in each set are hinged (Fig 5 ref 36) by a living hinge relative to one another, and wherein the individual clips have connectors (at ref 35) for connecting the clips to the trays.

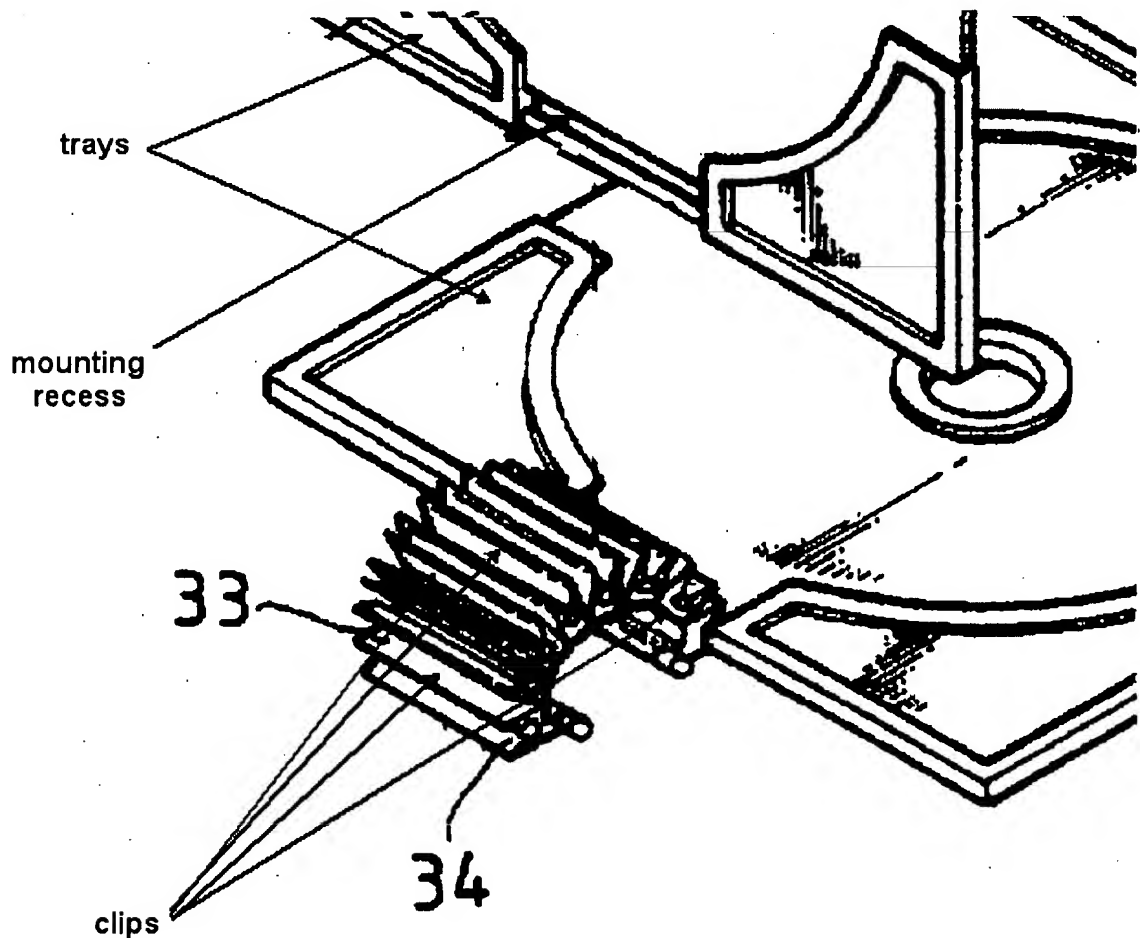


Fig 4 Li '681.

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With respect to claims 22-24, Li discloses that the one or more sets of clips bend along a longitudinal axis for inserting into the one or more mounting recesses on the edges of the trays and that after the bent clips are inserted into the mounting recesses, pressure is applied to an exposed surface until the clips return to their initial configuration and for locking the clips into the mounting recesses. The reduced neck portions/detents (just below ref 35) bend along a longitudinal axis to maintain the trays raised block/ projections (ref 43) in the slot/hole (ref 34) of the clip until released (See Fig 4 and column 3, lines 21-26).

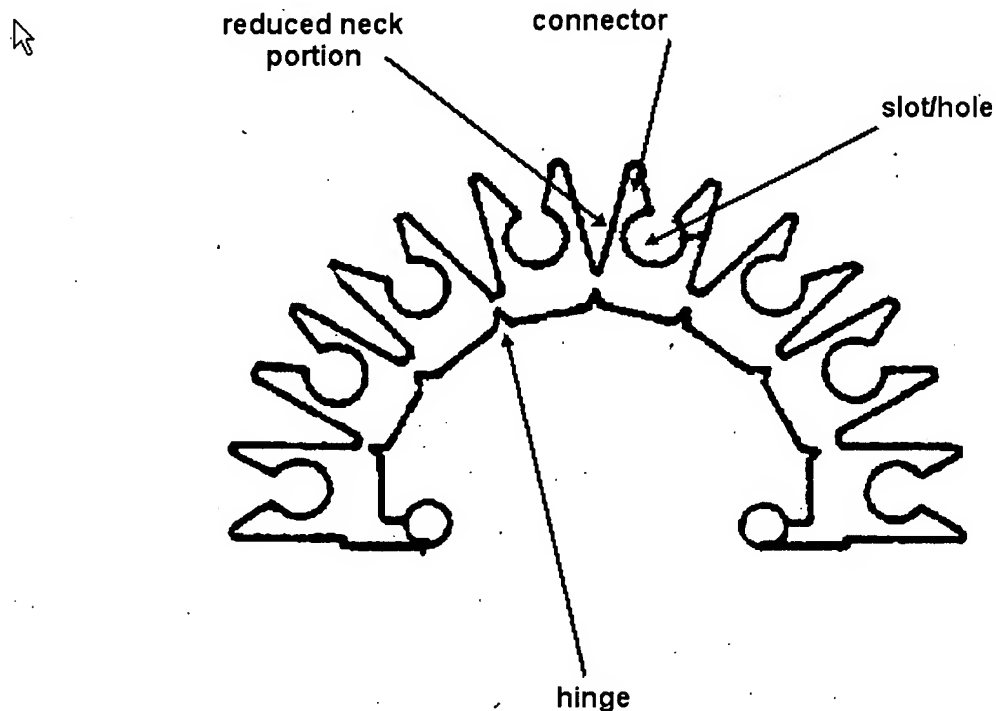


Fig 5 Li '681.

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With respect to claim 25, Li discloses that the clips are made of plastic (column 1, lines 66-67).

With respect to claim 26, Li discloses that the clips are trapezoidal (i.e. quadrilateral having at least two parallel sides; see Fig 5 generally) with triangles removed from a longer side surface (i.e. a triangle was removed from the upwardly extending projections at ref 35 such that the raised block of the tray could be more easily received by the reduced neck portion and into the slot) capable of bending the one or more clips along the longitudinal axis.

Claim Rejections - 35 USC § 103

The following is a quotation of 35 U.S.C. 103(a) which forms the basis for all obviousness rejections set forth in this Office action:

(a) A patent may not be obtained though the invention is not identically disclosed or described as set forth in section 102 of this title, if the differences between the subject matter sought to be patented and the prior art are such that the subject matter as a whole would have been obvious at the time the invention was made to a person having ordinary skill in the art to which said subject matter pertains. Patentability shall not be negated by the manner in which the invention was made.

The factual inquiries set forth in *Graham v. John Deere Co.*, 383 U.S. 1, 148 USPQ 459 (1966), that are applied for establishing a background for determining obviousness under 35 U.S.C. 103(a) are summarized as follows:

1. Determining the scope and contents of the prior art.
2. Ascertaining the differences between the prior art and the claims at issue.
3. Resolving the level of ordinary skill in the pertinent art.
4. Considering objective evidence present in the application indicating obviousness or nonobviousness.

Claim 29 is rejected under 35 U.S.C. 103(a) as being unpatentable over Li (US Pat 5,727,681).

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With respect to claim 29, Li discloses locking ribs (Fig 4 ref 43) projecting inward from ends of the mounting recesses on the individual trays and complementary grooves (Fig 5 ref 34) on ends of the one or more clips for receiving and holding the locking ribs. Li also discloses that the clip has a dovetail shape (see triangular portion of projection at 35). Li does not disclose that the mounting recesses have complementary dovetail shapes. However, it would have been an obvious matter of design choice to reshape the mounting recesses of Li to have complementary dovetail shapes so as to provide better complimentary fit between the recesses and clips, since such a modification would have involved a mere change in the shape of a component. A change in shape is generally recognized as being within the level of ordinary skill in the art. In re Dailey, 357 F.2d 669, 149 USPQ 47 (CCPA 1966). As to the remainder of claim 29,

Allowable Subject Matter

Claim 28 is objected to as being dependent upon a rejected base claim, but would be allowable if rewritten in independent form including all of the limitations of the base claim and any intervening claims.

Response to Arguments

Applicant's arguments filed 2/20/07 have been fully considered but they are not persuasive. Applicant's arguments fail to comply with 37 CFR 1.111(b) because they amount to a general allegation that the claims define a patentable invention without specifically pointing out how the language of the claims patentably distinguishes them from the references.

Applicant's arguments do not comply with 37 CFR 1.111(c) because they do not clearly point out the patentable novelty which he or she thinks the claims present in view of the state of the art disclosed by the references cited or the objections made. Further, they do not show how the amendments avoid such references or objections.

With respect to claim 21, Li Fig 4 clearly shows that the number of clips corresponds to the number of trays. With respect to claims 22 and 23, Li Fig 4 clearly shows the clips bending along the longitudinal (in a downward peelable fashion) axis and are capable of having pressure applied such that the clips can return to their initial configuration (compare Fig 5 and 6). With respect to claims 24-29, and in as much as Applicant has structurally defined "trapezoidal" and "dovetail" shapes and "locking ribs," Li clearly shows these limitations as described in the rejection above.

Conclusion

The prior art made of record and not relied upon is considered pertinent to applicant's disclosure. See PTO-892 attached below.

Applicant's amendment necessitated the new ground(s) of rejection presented in this Office action. Accordingly, **THIS ACTION IS MADE FINAL**. See MPEP § 706.07(a). Applicant is reminded of the extension of time policy as set forth in 37 CFR 1.136(a).

A shortened statutory period for reply to this final action is set to expire **THREE MONTHS** from the mailing date of this action. In the event a first reply is filed within **TWO MONTHS** of the mailing date of this final action and the advisory action is not mailed until after the end of the **THREE-MONTH** shortened statutory period, then the

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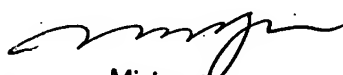
shortened statutory period will expire on the date the advisory action is mailed, and any extension fee pursuant to 37 CFR 1.136(a) will be calculated from the mailing date of the advisory action. In no event, however, will the statutory period for reply expire later than SIX MONTHS from the date of this final action.

Any inquiry concerning this communication or earlier communications from the examiner should be directed to Steven B. Pollicoff whose telephone number is (571)272-7818. The examiner can normally be reached on M-F: 7:30A.M.-4:00P.M.

If attempts to reach the examiner by telephone are unsuccessful, the examiner's supervisor, Mickey Yu can be reached on (571)272-4562. The fax phone number for the organization where this application or proceeding is assigned is 571-273-8300.

Information regarding the status of an application may be obtained from the Patent Application Information Retrieval (PAIR) system. Status information for published applications may be obtained from either Private PAIR or Public PAIR. Status information for unpublished applications is available through Private PAIR only. For more information about the PAIR system, see <http://pair-direct.uspto.gov>. Should you have questions on access to the Private PAIR system, contact the Electronic Business Center (EBC) at 866-217-9197 (toll-free). If you would like assistance from a USPTO Customer Service Representative or access to the automated information system, call 800-786-9199 (IN USA OR CANADA) or 571-272-1000.

SBP 5/11/07


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